

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Decision on Appeal issued by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (hereinafter "Board") on November 30, 2005 affirming the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-12 and 17-19 of the instant applicant, Applicants hereby amend claim 1, cancel claims 2 and 5 and introduce new claims 31 and 32. Applicants submit that the amendments are fairly based on the specification and do not add new matter.

The Decision on Appeal issued by the Board was mailed to Applicants on November 30, 2005. A Notice of Abandonment was issued prematurely by the Examiner on January 10, 2006. Applicants assert that the last day to respond to the Decision on Appeal would be two months from the mailing date, January 30, 2006. Applicants submit that the Notice of Abandonment was issued in error. Applicants' representative spoke with the Examiner on January 13, 2006, and the Examiner verbally agreed to vacate the notice.

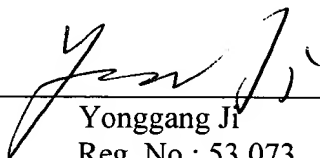
Applicants have amended claim 1. Claim 1 now contains the limitations of both claims 2 and 5. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claim 1 is not rendered obvious in view of the references (Larsson, in view of Lihme, et al., or in view of Schaeffer, et al. or in view of Manganaro, et al.). Therefore, Applicants assert that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are moot.

Applicants also introduce new claims 31 and 32. Support for the newly added claims can be found in Example 2 of the specification. Applicants submit that these claims are fairly based on the specification and do not add new matter.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the present application, including claims 1, 3-4, 6-12, 17-19 and 31-32 are in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

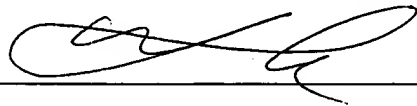
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on January 17, 2006.

Signature: 

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